NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

Six men were running for Mayor Giuliani's job when kamikaze terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and stopped the primary in its tracks.

Yesterday, as President Bush dispatched more than 150 combat aircraft to the Persian Gulf to punish terror kingpin Osama Bin Laden, many New Yorkers could not imagine anybody but Rudy in charge.

With the dust of the fallen towers still flecking his shoulders, Giuliani barked out orders, encouraged rescuers, consoled victims, wept with widows. Over the weekend, he had even made good on his promise to walk down the aisle a young bride whose firefighter brother had died in an earlier inferno.

Even the mayor's fiercest critics conceded that these have been Giuliani's finest hours. "I don't see any reason why people can't write Giuliani's name in on the ballot," former mayor Ed Koch told a national TV audience.

The austere French president, Jacques Chirac, came yesterday with more laurels, dubbing him "Rudy the Rock." And Giuliani could not stop himself from grinning when asked whether the rules should be changed so he could run for a third term.

"I'm leaving right now," he joked, and pretended to go — but only for a moment, because there was still so much to do.

A judge was to weigh today whether to hold the primary in October.

The digging at Ground Zero went on. Though it had been a week since any survivors had been found, the rescuers attacked the rubble as if it were Day 1.

The stock market rallied even as the airlines cut thousands of jobs. And Manhattan braced for the return today of the many Jews who had stayed home to mark their new year.

In Islamabad, the president of Pakistan took to the airwaves and tried to convince his reluctant people to side with the Americans. "This is not," he said, "a war against Islam."

But thousands of Pakistanis burned Bush in effigy on the streets of Karachi. And in neighboring Afghanistan, the people fled for the many hills while their Taliban leaders wrestled with the President's demand for Bin Laden's hide.

Bush did not wait for their answer and launched Operation Infinite Justice. The mighty aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt and a dozen other Navy ships steamed out of the base at Norfolk, Va., carrying sailors and Marines.

"It is time for us to pick up the mantle to destroy terrorism and remove this cancer," Navy Secretary Gordon England declared.

And as the ships sailed off, a military band played "New York, New York."

Corky Siemaszko

CITY_21MC100_008016600

NYC-WTC_000412007